

How to save a Saturday by OrangeLovePerson

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Summary: It's 1985, and Mike and El are spending the morning together.

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Mike wakes up early, that morning. Maybe early enough for it to not even be called a morning, quite yet.

In fact, if his parents knew about just how early their son will leave the house today,- looking confused and in a hurry,- his Mum might worry what the neighbours thought of it. But it's Saturday, so his parents are still fast asleep, and they won't notice Mike leave.

He's getting dressed, his hands a little shaky. He just woke up from a pretty disturbing nightmare – the sort of nightmare that leaves you without any real information about what you just dreamt, and instead just with a horrible feeling in your stomach. There's no cryptic details to analyse, there's just a mix of awful emotions in his system. It wasn't even the first nightmare this week, which is part of the reason why Mike is up so early and about to leave the house quite soon. Nothing sets occasional anxiety better on pause than being near El – She's like the snooze-button on his inner alarm clock, or something. Mike grins as he thinks of that, putting on some socks.

They are halfway through the Summer holidays: Halfway through the last chapter of El's isolation, and as much as Mike is looking forward to everything that will change, he's also kind of scared as hell.

He's not going to tell her that, of course. At least not in those words. She needs all the optimism and encouragement she can get. This is not about him. But at night, just before sleep reaches Mike, the worries sometimes find a way in, anyway.

What if someone recognises her? Anyone could have noticed her on that school assembly in Will's honour, or at any other point during that very first week with her. It's been over a year since then, almost two, but some people are ridiculously good at remembering faces, aren't they? One person would be enough. One person alone could ruin everything for them. Could turn El in, somewhere.

There must still be a lot of people in this world who'd like to see her

captured. Just because the lab in Hawkins got closed down, doesn't mean she's entirely safe. *And maybe*, a creepy voice in Mike's head is whispering right then, *maybe she'll never be entirely safe...*

Mike needs to breathe, so he quickly makes his way out of his room and down the stairs, careful not to wake anybody up. The back door of his basement is pulled closed behind him, a few instants later. And as he rides his bike down the streets, shivering from the cold and wishing he'd brought a thicker jumper, breathing comes easily. Mike's lungs fill with clean, fresh air, calming his nerves down.

But he still needs to see her. He has to.

"El?", he silently asks into the walkie, as soon as he's reached that point in the forest where he has to climb off of his bike and walk, "El, are you up yet?"

Please say yes, please say yes, please say yes.

"Yes.", she answers through the walkie, almost immediately. Mike beams.

"Oh, okay!... Er, I'm thinking about sitting by the river for a bit, skipping stones and stuff... Would you like to join me?"

"Are you already there?", she wonders. The bushes around him are shaking in the wind, and Mike blushes a little.

"Um, no... I'm actually pretty close to the cabin, so I thought we could go there together. But we don't have to, I mean..."

"I'll be outside in a minute.", Eleven replies, and Mike can hear the smile in her voice. He sighs, glad that she gets him so well.

It really only takes her about a minute to meet him, as he approaches the cabin. Her curly hair almost covers her shoulders by now. Her smile is bright, her dark-blue raincoat a little bulky on her.

It's sometimes hard not to openly stare at El.

"Hi.", Mike breathes, smiling.

"Hi.", she answers, walking up to him, further and further.

He wonders when she will stop walking and is disappointed when she does. Oh, screw it, he thinks, before closing the obvious gap and pulling her into a soft hug. She responds quite quickly, drawing him closer. She is so warm.

Mike has to laugh when they are still in the exact same spot a full minute later. She is giggling, too. But hey, it's not everyday that they get to properly embrace each other, for as long as they'd like! *You* try pull such a stunt in front of Dustin and Lucas! They'd take the mickey out of Mike for that for *ages*. And Max gets that stupid smirk sometimes, like she knows something they don't, and it drives Mike up the wall. Can't a guy hug one of his best friends, once in a while, without receiving all this laughter for it?

The worst part is that their friends are only the start. Once El is in school with them, showing...- well, showing *affection* for her like that might get him into *real* trouble. Not that he's planning on snogging her in public, or anything like that! But, you know, it might be nice to be able to hold her hand, now and then. Or to sit next to her a lot. Maybe peck her on the cheek, occasionally, when not everyone is watching.

But if jerks like Troy catch wind of this thing between Mike and El, it might cause some serious problems.

Maybe, Eleven becomes just as unpopular as Mike and his friends are, just because people associate her with them. Being unpopular is not really an issue, in general, but then again the idea of people pushing El around like they sometimes do Mike makes him grit his teeth to the point where he's almost in need of a dentist. And if it's bothering her half as much, too, then she might lose control over her powers, at one point. And when that happens, they're screwed.

But another bad outcome would be the opposite: What if El isn't unpopular at all? What if everyone notices how funny and cool she is, and then El starts hanging out with a bunch of other people, too?

Mike keeps telling himself that this would be an issue, because: The more time she spends around other people, the higher her chances of

accidentally *revealing* something get.

Obviously, that's only part of the truth. He also secretly obsesses about how likely it is that other people find something out about El... *because she wants them to.*

El is so...

Well, she's just the sort of person you'd really want to like you, alright? And someone could take advantage of that. Make her see just how much of a nerdy, weird group Mike and his friends are. Make her think that hanging out with other types of people could be more fun. Make her forget them.

Mike nearly rolls his eyes at himself whenever that particular thought occurs to him. El is obviously way too sweet and loyal to ever actually replace her friends. Besides, they've been through *so* much together. Like, if there's anything more exhausting and crazy that a bunch of kids can have to deal with, side by side, it really doesn't come to Mike's mind.

The Demogorgon, looking for Will, jumping off cliffs and losing El for an entire year, - only to almost lose her *again* and to fight a bunch of demonic roots and mutated dogs from another dimension, to prevent it – how much more difficult stuff can a person possibly go through?

As El unwraps her arms from around his neck, she frowns.

"What's wrong?", she asks, eyeing him questioningly.

"Huh?"

"You're quiet.", she states, as an explanation. Mike just shrugs.

"Nothing's wrong.", he says, and smiles. "Besides, just because someone is being quiet, doesn't mean something's wrong. You're pretty quiet, most of the time."

"I'm being normal-quiet. You're being upset-quiet.", she tries to make clear.

Mike looks at his shoes. Damn, why does she constantly notice this

sort of stuff? Mike scratches his neck.

"Yeah, well... I didn't really sleep all that great, last night.", he shrugs.

"No?"

He shakes his head as an answer, then suddenly catches sight of the cabin. "Where's your Dad, by the way?", he asks El.

Mike knows that Hopper probably isn't home, seeing as the tall, bearded man is currently not standing near the window and grumpily glaring at Mike while drinking coffee. Which is their usual morning routine for such occasions.

El turns around, looking over at the cabin, too.

"Had to go to work early today. Someone called the police and really wanted to talk to him... It was bad."

Mike's brows shoot up on his forehead. "Really? Why, what happened? Some sort of emergency?"

El nods, looking earnest. "A bird attack."

"A what?"

"A bird attack, Mike. That's when a bird is attacking a person." She's still acting serious, but Mike can see her lips twitch.

"Or maybe another bird. I'm not sure if that counts.", she adds.

"If that counts as a bird attack, you mean?", Mike plays along, looking really thoughtful, too. "I don't think it does. Would be a regular attack for the bird who gets attacked. Right?"

"Hm.", El agrees. A moment later, they're both laughing.

"Okay, let's go.", Mike says, when their chuckles have died down. "Maybe you can show me that spot with all the great stones?"

El nods, looking happy. "I hope I can find it again..."

She, Max and Lucas have apparently found this one tiny area,

somewhere around the lake: It's like the secret-fridge-of-chocolate-pudding-equivalent of rocks. A real bunch of really cool stones are to be found, somewhere along the shore, just waiting to be discovered. For skipping some over the water, for instance, like they are often doing – there's really not a lot you can do outside, since El still has to spend the majority of her time close to the cabin. But finding a bunch of rocks is also quite nice for Lucas' slingshot, he's often looking for some.

For a couple minutes, Mike and El are quietly strolling through the forest, arm in arm. It's always awesome to be close to her, but something about being the first person to see her in the morning is extra-comforting, somehow.

Maybe because of the way she sleepily rubs her eyes with the back of her hand. Or because there is still an entire day ahead of them. You'd think that staying in lame old Hawkins all summer long would quickly get boring for a kid, but Mike honestly can't remember when he has last been this happy. He gets to spend so much time with El and the others, it's incredible.

At one point of their walk, Mike starts talking, telling El about his last "Dig Dug" score and about how he's almost as good as Lucas at it, by now. And by the time Mike is done with describing every detail of *Dustin's* usual techniques in the game, Mike has linked his fingers with hers, trying really hard to look casual about it. El leans her head against his shoulder in response, making his ears go red and his breath hitch, and he really hopes she hasn't heard that.

It's sort of weird, really, how El can have this effect on him, still, but the truth is that it's surprisingly difficult to ever really get used to her.

And then again she sometimes seems to feel the same way, and then she gets that shy, surprised smile when he hugs her or holds her hand. Maybe it's normal for – er – *relationships* to feel that way... But Mike actually kind of doubts it. It can't be a normal part of life to be this crazy about someone. To feel so connected to them, right from the start.

Skipping stones is harder than it looks, but it becomes easier to win

at such competitions if you politely ask your favourite person to tune her telekinetic superpowers down a little. Or to stop using them altogether, since that should definitely count as cheating.

"If you think about it, it actually shouldn't.", El says, wisely. "You have more experience with throwing things the normal way."

She skips a stone in the water. It immediately sinks.

"And it's still tricky, like this."

She skips another rock across the water, from her open palm over to the surface. It touches the lake just barely: one – two – three – four – - eleven times.

"Yeah, right.", Mike scoffs, his eyes sparkling. "Looks like that would really be a fair fight."

El looks deeply in thought, just for a moment.

"Mike?"

"Yes?"

He moves a little closer to her, hoping she's not freezing by now. El put off her bulky raincoat for them to sit on, seeing as everything was quite cold and wet on the floor, but the shirt she had on under there looks a little thin. Yes, it's July, but it's also still early in the morning and it has been surprisingly chilly, this past week.

"Did you ever try it?"

Mike studies her face, so close to him. She looks incredibly innocent, right then, with her pink nose and her long lashes, and this utterly trusting look in her eyes – it's kind of weird to think that the very same person could easily make his brain explode, right about now, if that's what she wanted. Wouldn't even take a minute.

And no, it's not like Mike was ever truly scared of her. Nervous, in all the variations the word had to offer, but mostly... Mostly he has felt protective of her from the very beginning.

It's just sort of amazing to think about how El is the kind of person the universe wants to grant with such power. *El*, of all people. Could you imagine how horrible someone else might have exploited this strength? There must be tons of people in the world who'd kill for what El can do, and who'd then only use it to kill some more. And yet, here *she* is. Someone who only wants Eggos and safety and a bunch of hugs, once in a while.

Mike shakes his head a little, zooming back in on their conversation.

"Did I ever try *what?*"

"Did you ever try... what I can do?"

"Huh?", he replies, a little dumbly.

"Did you ever, um..." She looks frustrated, trying to remember the right words, "Did you ever try using ... *telekinesis?*"

Mike's mouth forms a silent little 'o' in surprise. "Oh.", he says, because that syllable fits so well into his current facial expression. Like a subtitle.

She's eyeing him expectantly, a little desperately, almost.

"I... I can't do that stuff, El. I'm not like you. You know that, don't you?"

She sighs, her face falling a little, and for one crazy second Mike wishes he could have lied to her in some believable way, just to not see her look like that.

"I know.", she mumbles, her eyes finding the water again, the trees on the other side of it, and their many reflections on it's skin.

"But Mike, I thought... I mean, I used to think that I can't *talk*... really much. Before."

Her gaze is locked on his again, and he stares right back. "And I still can't."

He opens his mouth to protest, but she's already continuing.

"I mean, it could be better. A lot better."

"El..."

"But I practised a lot, and it helped.", she states, looking more confident than before.

Mike smiles, nodding. He's proud of her, and she needs to know that.

"So...?"

"So, how can you really... *be sure* ... that you can't do what I can do, if you never tried?", she challenges.

He thinks about that for a moment.

"I don't think it's about *training*.", he contemplates. "Aren't your powers always stronger when you scared? Or angry, or... Or just really convinced that you need to use them, El?"

She frowns, eyeing him intently.

"And, when the bad men were making you do stuff, in the lab, it wasn't as powerful?"

She's shaking her head, looking like she's starting to understand what Mike means.

"So it's probably not about practise, is it? I mean, sure, *you* can practise how to use your powers, but at the end of the day, they've always been a part of you. Haven't they?"

He licks his lips, thoughtfully. "I doubt that other people can learn to do what you can do, El. It's something really special. *You're* really special."

Okay, that last part might have been a bit too much, - obviously true, but too much in the way that his ears are currently feeling very inflammable . He clears his throat, avoiding her gaze just a little.

Mike's surprised when he hears her laughing, softly, a moment later.

"You're special too, Mike.", she comments, sweetly, and her smile is wide as she flips another rock into the water.

It jumps once, twice... And then it sinks, but half a second later she has already pulled it right back into her open palm with her mind. It's wet from the water, but apart from that the whole movement was so quick that you could have imagined it. Mike stares at her.

"What?", she asks, rubbing the flat stone dry against her jeans, "I'm *recycling*."

Mike snorts.

They start building little towers with the rocks, at one point, mostly because it's been so very long since they last build a snowman together. But rocks are not really the safest material to build a huge tower with, at least if you're not using some sort of glue, so when the wind picks up their creations quickly tumble apart. Oh well.

Mike decides he should probably head back home soon when it's almost ten 'o' clock. Yes, his Dad likes to sleep in on the weekends, but Holly absolutely doesn't, and his Mum might already be wondering where Mike is.

He and El say goodbye at the cabin, where he left his bike.

When he hugs her, she mumbles: "Why were you upset, earlier?"

Mike closes his eyes, holding her just the tiniest bit tighter against him.

"I was just feeling nervous, I guess."

"Nervous?"

"M-hm. I just... I keep thinking about how much is going to change, soon, and I'm really excited, but it's also a pretty big deal, so...-"

"When school starts, you mean?"

He nods.

El's fingernails are rubbing tiny, soothing circles into the back of his jumper, almost making him shiver.

"Mike, I'm nervous, too. 'It's okay to be nervous', remember? 'That's where the fun comes from.'"

He chuckles, rolling his eyes. That's exactly what he told her, last week, right before their group watched "Dawn of the Dead" together at Lucas' place.

"And if it ever gets too scary, you can just close your eyes and hold my hand. I'll be right there.", she quotes him again, smiling.

Yeah, but that's exactly what I'm nervous about, Mike thinks. *You not being there.*

But he pushes the thought aside, focusing on right now instead. On her smell and her voice and her warmth.

"Will is visiting later.", El says, pulling away from Mike. "You should also come. He'll show me how to draw light bulbs."

Mike grins, not entirely sure what that is necessary for, but intrigued nevertheless.

"Okay, I'll be there. *Three – One – Five* again?", he jokes.

It's El's turn to roll her eyes (– she's adorable –) and with a tiny movement of her head, she picks Mike's bike up from the floor and makes it roll over to them, all on its own.

"It's: *Three Fifteen*, Mike.", she states. Before Mike can even reply, or take his bike from the invisible force that is holding it upright, El has leaned in and dropped a quick kiss to his lips. They are tingling like effervescent powder, making his insides melt.

She's disappearing into the cabin, a moment later, leaving Mike with his thoughts on how amazing the day is going to be. And on how it's good that some things will probably never change.

The End.

A.N.: Hi guys,

I just quickly have to say something. Some of you probably already heard, but in case you didn't: A few days ago, the immense cyber-bullying against Millie Bobby Brown finally reached a point where she felt the need to delete her twitter account. People are using her pictures and her name in racist and homophobic contexts, just for fun. I'm so sad she has to deal with all of this at her age, the way so many people are treating her is just insane. Let's send her all our warm thoughts today, okay? It doesn't matter if you love her as much as I do, or not. No kid deserves to feel hated.